FINAL

Agency: **477**   **Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Decision Package Code/Title: **AG**   **Black Bear Monitoring & Management**

Budget Period: **2011-13**

Budget Level: **PL - Performance Level**

Recommendation Summary Text:

WDFW requests additional funding to research, select and implement a new black bear population estimate and monitoring methodology. Currently, only demographic information from harvest reports are used to create population estimates that guide the development of bear hunting seasons. This funding will enable WDFW to better understand the short-term impacts of regulation and environmental changes on black bear populations without the time lag associated with data based solely on harvest information.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
104-1 State Wildlife Account-State	50,000	150,000	200,000
Total Cost	**50,000**	**150,000**	**200,000**

Staffing	FY 2012	FY 2013	Annual Average
FTEs	**.0**	**2.4**	**1.2**

Package Description:

WDFW utilizes a forecasting method called reconstruction modeling to develop statewide black bear population estimates. This method relies upon the demographic information of harvested animals from harvest reports.

Because of lag time associated with the receipt and compilation of harvest reports, WDFW cannot be sufficiently responsive to the variety of environmental and man-made changes affecting black bear populations. It is necessary that WDFW identify an alternative forecasting method capable of accounting for this variety of factors to increase the validity of population estimates for the black bear population.

With sufficient funding, WDFW will: 1) develop black bear population estimates in three black bear management zones using mark-recapture and/or DNA sampling research projects; 2) develop and test a survey method using female and cub survival as an indicator to population status; 3) evaluate population reconstruction modeling using demographic information from end of season harvest reports as an indicator of population status; and 4) continue to use harvested bear demographic information as a secondary indicator of population trends.

With the research, selection and implementation of an effective, real-time population monitoring technique, WDFW will maximize the ability to develop population estimates and further detect changes in black bear population status. This will enable us to simultaneously improve conservation of bears and maximize recreational harvest opportunity. This change will provide a management tool capable of evaluating the effects of black bear harvest strategies.

Implementation would begin in the summer of 2012; the study would run for three to five years; with a final report completed in year six. Once a technique is developed, it would be conducted annually.

Dave Ware, Game Division Manager, Wildlife Program (360) 902 2509

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

This decision package has statewide impact.

Performance Measure Detail

Activity:

Incremental Changes

No measures submitted for package

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

The Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2011-2017 Strategic Plan contains a goal statement and a corresponding strategy associated with this decision package. Goal 1 states that the Department shall, "Achieve healthy, diverse and sustainable fish and wildlife populations". This goal has a corresponding objective to: "Protect and perpetuate wildlife species through sound wildlife management." In addition, the strategy is to "Manage game species to support healthy populations and sustainable recreational opportunities."

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

This request contributes to two Priorities of Government (POG) result areas; result area 8, improving the quality of Washington's natural resources and result area 9, improving cultural and recreational opportunities throughout the state.

For result area 8, the activities proposed as elements of this decision package appear as highest priority purchases (90% level) including conducting surveys of fish, wildlife and habitat.

Result area 9 has one activity identified in Priorities of Government that relates to this decision package; managing fish and wildlife harvest.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

The Game Management Activity ranked 22 out of 148 Activities in the 2011-13 POG Result Area "Protect Natural Resources and Cultural and Recreational Opportunities".

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Maintaining a balance in the population levels of predators and prey is important to many people. There has been recent criticism regarding the Department's understanding of predator population levels and impacts on other species. This proposal will help improve the Department's credibility and ability to measure impacts as well as develop appropriate management strategies.

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

We have continued to use harvest information and population models to ensure we are maintaining a sustainable population of black bears. In addition, we have attempted to monitor mortality rates for small scale manipulations of black bear populations without much

success due in part to the small scale of the project, which is driven by lack of funding.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

The Department will continue to struggle to understand the short term or local population impacts of black bear management and harvest strategies. The time lag between observing a population change in the harvest data versus using a direct population estimation technique will hinder our ability to ensure that black bear populations are sustainable and we are maximizing recreational opportunity.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

None.

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

None.

Expenditure and revenue calculations and assumptions

Revenue:

The revenue for the Bear, Deer & Elk license plate is collected by the Department of Licensing. The current fund balance for this account is sufficient to support this request.

Expenditures:

Salaries and Benefits:
In FY 13 -1.00 Fish and Wildlife Research Scientist 1 would be hired to develop and manage the study and a 1.00 Fish and Wildlife Biologist 1 would assist with capture and monitoring black bears.

Goods and Services:

FY 12 includes purchase field supplies & equipment necessary for program operations (e.g., radio telemetry equipment, bear traps, etc.)

Administrative overhead of 23.51% is included in goods and services FY12=$7,500 and FY 13 ongoing =$28,500 / yr. Administrative FTE's are included at 0.4 / yr.

Travel:
Standard costs are included for travel

Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?

All costs are ongoing. Once the study has been completed, the resulting monitoring technique would be employed.

Object Detail		FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
A	Salaries And Wages		81,300	81,300
B	Employee Benefits		37,700	37,700
E	Goods And Services	39,500	29,500	69,000
G	Travel		1,500	1,500
J	Capital Outlays	10,500		10,500
Total Objects		**50,000**	**150,000**	**200,000**